11th October 1928]

Decision of Government on the report of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

*523 Q.—Mr. A. Kaleswara Rao: Will the hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government have arrived at any decision on the report from the Chief Engineer for Irrigation on the resolution passed in this Council on 24th January 1928 to appoint a committee to investigate into the schemes of the high flood channel from the Kistna beginning from Mulapadu;

(b) whether a committee has been appointed; if so, what the committee did; and

(c) whether the Government have received any representations that the ryots concerned are prepared to make some contribution towards the cost of the schemes?

A.—(a) & (b) The Chief Engineer submitted a report at the end of July last. The gist of it was that the levels which had been taken showed that the scheme in the form suggested was impracticable, but that it might be possible to evolve some satisfactory scheme if correct gaugings of the flow of the Kistna river above the Bezwada anicut were taken for three years. The Government have issued orders asking the Chief Engineer to apply for a special staff to gauge the river flow at several places. As the gauging season for the present year is nearly over it is proposed to include provision for the cost of this establishment in the next year's budget. Until the gaugings are taken, no definite conclusion is possible.

(c) Yes.

Mr. A. Kaleswara Rao:—"May I know why as yet a committee has not been appointed in pursuance of a resolution of this House?"

The hon. Sir Norman Marjoribanks:—"The reason has been given in the printed answer, Sir. Further, we want to know whether the scheme is possible from the engineering point of view."

Land Assignment

Assignment of lands to ex-military men in Nellore district.

*524 Q.—Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddi: Will the hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to state—

(a) the number of men recruited from Nellore district for military service during the Great War;

(b) how many of them have applied for a grant of land, either by themselves directly or through their relatives or heirs;

(c) how many of the applicants have been so assigned lands till now;

(d) how many cases are still pending assignment;

(e) the terms on which recruitment was made, especially in respect of the grant of land; and.

(f) whether those conditions as to grants of land have been completely and without reservation or differentiation adhered to at the time of assignment of lands; or whether the Government have been changing or modifying the rules from time to time; and if so, in what manner or in what instances?

[11th October 1928

A.—(*a*) Two hundred and sixty-nine combatants and 264 non-combatants.

(*b*), (*c*) & (*d*) The following statement gives particulars regarding applications for grant of land (on account of service in the army, in the Nellore district from October 1924 to 30th June 1928—

Number of applications received	513
Number of assignments made	277
Number of applications rejected	203
Number pending on 30th June 1928	33

It is not known how many of these applications were from men recruited from Nellore district for military service during the Great War and how many from ex-army men who enlisted before the War or who lived in other districts. Figures relating to applications made prior to October 1924 are not available.

(*e*) The terms of recruitment provided for the payment of war bonus, certain rates of pay and in the case of sepoys free rations in addition to pay. The grant of land was not one of the terms of recruitment of either combatants or non-combatants nor was it a condition subject to which recruits were enlisted. The Government, however, in 1916 and 1917 issued orders under which men who enlisted whether before or after the outbreak of hostilities in the combatant ranks of the Indian Army were given preference over other applicants under the darkhast rules up to a limit of five acres of wet land or ten acres of dry. Men newly recruited were permitted to put in their darkhast applications immediately on enlistment but the grant was made only after the recruit had served for six months to the satisfaction of his commanding officer. Collectors were authorized to waive the collection of the value of trees on the land up to Rs. 50—a limit which was subsequently raised to Rs. 500.

(*f*) In May 1919, the war being over, the Government applied the concessions specified above to discharged combatant soldiers provided that application was made within twelve months from the date of discharge and that the applicant's discharge certificate showed that his service had been satisfactory. In August 1920 the Government withdrew these darkhast concessions but directed that military service should be taken into account in deciding rival claims to grants of land under the darkhast rules. In April 1921, the Government directed that officers and men of the Indian Army who actually served in the Great War whether as combatants or non-combatants should be accorded a preference over other applicants in regard to assignment of land on darkhast and accordingly empowered Collectors to authorize the assignment of lands to such persons in preference to other claimants. The concession was to be in force for a period of three years from April 1921, and the preferential claim was limited to a single grant not ordinarily exceeding five acres of wet land or ten acres of dry. The concession sanctioned in April 1921 expired in April 1924. In

11th October 1928]

October 1924, the Government extended the concessions for a further period of three years from April 1924 but restricted them to officers and men of the Indian Army who were recruited before the armistice to the combatant ranks of the Army. The concession was not continued to non-combatants because the supply of suitable land was limited and because it was considered that non-combatants had less need of special treatment than the fighting men. In order to ensure that the benefit of the concessions was fully availed of by combatants, Collectors were requested to reserve suitable lands as far as possible and to prepare lists of eligible men who had already applied for but had not been granted any land and to deal with them first. In order to watch the progress of assignment, Collectors were required to submit a quarterly return. In April and June 1925, the Government extended the scope of these concessions by empowering Collectors to waive the recovery of subdivision fees and of the value of the trees standing on the land up to a maximum of Rs. 500. Later in the same year the Government authorized the assignment of valuable land including tank-bed land free to ex-soldiers. To provide further facilities for the grant of land, the Government in December 1925 requested Collectors to publish in the District Gazette lists of land available for assignment to combatants, to have copies of the lists hung up in the village chavadi and taluk office and communicated to Honorary correspondents and to require karnams to give the necessary particulars to intending applicants and to render them all possible help. The concessions expired in April 1927. But as it was represented to the Government that there were still many deserving persons to whom land had not been assigned the Government in an order of April 1927—to which wide publicity was given—extended the concession to applications received on or before 30th June 1927. In regard to applications presented after that date, it was directed that officers and men of the Indian Army who actually served as combatants in the Great War should be entitled to preferential consideration in regard to the assignment of land in the village in which they resided unless the applicant had been assigned in that village land amounting to five acres of wet or its equivalent at two acres of dry for one of wet after 14th April 1921 the date on which the concessions were first granted. The preferential claim of such officers or men is to rank immediately after that of a person who has occupied the land and improved it or is holding the trees on the land under the tree-tax system or is using the water of the well on the land for cultivation.

Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddi :—"In the answers to clauses (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) of this question, it is stated that as many as 203 applications were rejected. May I know on what grounds they were rejected and also the nature of the applications?"

The hon. Sir Norman Marjoribanks :—"I want notice, Sir."